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## Intensive Reflexives as Signals of Information Structure

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### 1. The English intensive reflexive: background

The intensive reflexive (IR) in English is identical in form to the reflexive pronoun,<sup>7</sup> but appears in several non-argument positions in the sentence: immediately following the antecedent (PNself, 1a), following or within the predicate (VPself, 1b) and following or within the auxiliary set (PAUXself, in 1c).

1. a. The judge himself may be guilty.
- b. The judge may be guilty himself.
- c. The judge may himself be guilty.

While the latter two always refer to subject antecedents, the PNself can accompany an antecedent in all syntactic positions, as in (2).

2. a. We were questioned by the judge himself.
- b. The accusation came from the judge himself.
- c. The implications are far reaching and will affect many beyond the judge himself.

The linguistic literature on this construction can be characterized as predominantly isomorphic, matching specific interpretations with positions / distribution. Thus, the PNself has been associated with concepts such as contrast, remarkability, prominence, topicality and centrality, while the non-adjacent IRs have been correlated with concepts such as direct involvement, inclusion and exclusion (cf., Edmondson & Plank 1978; König 1991; Baker 1995; Kemmer 1995; Golde 1999; Siemund 2000; Creswell 2002; Gast 2006; *inter alia*).

However, the diverse characterizations cover only a subset of IR data, leaving some usage unaddressed, while the similarities between the different types remain largely unaccounted for. More significantly, there is a wide range of productive exceptions to the apparent distinctions (cf., Cohen 2004, ms.; Gast 2006); most prominently, interpretations **are not restricted** to specific positions. The examples in (1), for instance, can all be characterized as indicating prominence, centrality, contrast, remarkability, inclusion or exclusion.

The absence of correlation is unexplained in isomorphic analyses and undermines their basis.

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<sup>7</sup> This is intended simply as a descriptive characterisation, with no theoretical implications as to the relations between the two functions.

## 2. A monosemous analysis of the IR - Comparison

I propose a unified analysis of IRs (following elements from Moravcsik 1972; König 1991) according to which IRs evoke a set of alternatives to the referent and indicate a comparison between the referent and those alternatives. This function is similar to that of particles like *even*, *only*, *also*. IRs display a range of interpretations associated with such particles: **scalarity**, **inclusion**, **exclusion** and combinations of the two (3-8).<sup>8</sup>

3. a. Peter signed the petition himself.
- b. Peter himself signed the petition.

**Inclusive:** Someone other than Peter signed the petition.

4. a. Derek himself wrote the letter.
- b. Derek wrote the letter himself.

**Exclusive:** Nobody in the set other than Derek wrote the letter.

5. a. Derek himself invited me.
- b. Derek invited me himself.

**Scalar:** Derek is a particularly prominent member of the set to invite me.

6. a. Bill Gates himself uses Firefox.
- b. Bill Gates uses Firefox himself.

**Inclusive:** Someone other than Bill Gates uses Firefox.

**Scalar:** Bill Gates is a particularly prominent member of the set to use Firefox.

7. (Since the plumber never showed up,)
  - a. Chloe fixed the tap herself.
  - b. Chloe herself fixed the tap.

**Exclusive:** Nobody but Chloe fixed the tap.

**Scalar:** Chloe is a particularly prominent member of the set to fix the tap.

8. (Context: The computer always crashes, but)
  - a. the program itself is unstable.
  - b. the program is unstable itself.

**Exclusive:** Nothing else contributed to the instability of the program.

**Inclusive:** Something besides the program is unstable.<sup>9</sup>

**Table I. The Combinations of Implicatures of the IR**

	<b>Exclusive</b>	<b>Scalar</b>	<b>Inclusive</b>
<b>Inclusive</b>	Inclusive-Exclusive	Inclusive-Scalar	Inclusive
<b>Scalar</b>	Exclusive-Scalar	Scalar	
<b>Exclusive</b>	Exclusive		

<sup>8</sup> Like such particles, IRs display scope effects in the different positions (cf., Cohen 2004, ms.)

<sup>9</sup> Note that the two relations operate on different sets – the set of {unstable elements (in the system)} and the set of {cases of instability}.

The major difference between IRs and (prototypical) set particles is that in such particles the result of comparison is encoded in the particle: *also/too* automatically evoke inclusion; *even* automatically evokes scalar inclusion; *only/alone* automatically evoke exclusion.

In contrast, the IR is **underspecified** for the result of comparison. Rather, a variety of possibilities is available, **inferred** in each case **on the basis of relevant context**. This accounts for the high context dependence and fluidity of these interpretations in the case of the IR, which is not found with prototypical set particles.

9. a. The DA prosecuted the heads of the organization.  
The sniper himself was released. (exclusive)  
c. The DA couldn't convict the heads of the organization.  
The sniper himself was released. (inclusive)
10. a. The mayor attends the talks himself. His deputy is never seen there. (exclusive)  
b. The mayor attends the talks himself. His deputy is there all the time. (inclusive)

The basic function of the IR that emerges, the element common to all its instantiations, is the **evocation of a comparison** between the referent and a set of contextually determined alternatives. In some cases, that the IR seems to indicate nothing other than this comparison.

11. a. His [John Clay] grandfather was a Royal Duke, and he himself has been to Eton and Oxford.  
[Conan Doyle, The Red Headed League]  
b. At his hip he [Arren] wore a sword in a sheath of new leather figured with inlay of red and gold; but the sword itself was plain, with a worn cross hilt of silvered bronze.  
[Le Guin, The Shores of Atuan]

### 3. IR as a marker of anchoring

The IR also signals discourse linking and differences in the status of information—providing an anchoring set linking to the discourse (cf., Birner & Ward 1998).

The scope of the IR (through its role in set construction) marks information in the utterance a contextual reference point for the incorporation of new information. The subtle alternations in anchoring are highlighted when contrasted in the same context as illustrated in (13), based on the attested example in (12).

12. Context: a joke about Catholic schools in an article about the criticism of ethnic jokes.  
My mind goes back to a teenager I met in America in the 1960s, who told me a story about Christianity which I have never forgotten. [...] the kid who told me the story was himself Catholic. Catholics often tell the best anti-Catholic jokes. [Independent]
13. a. The kid himself was Catholic.  
b. The kid was Catholic himself.  
c. The kid was himself Catholic.

Both referent and predicate refer to discourse old entities, already activated in the prior context. It is only the relation between them that is discourse new. The scope of the various positions signals different links to the discourse and therefore different anchoring relations:

the PNself in (13a) marks the referent as the anchor to which the information in the predicate is related—Catholicism is a property ascribed to the kid;

in (13b) the VPself marks the predicate as the anchor—the kid is linked to the previously established set of {Catholics};

in (13c) both referent and predicate serve as anchors, and the relation between them is the element being highlighted as new—a link is established between the previously evoked kid and Catholicism.

The different anchoring signaled by the choice of IRs in a discourse segment account for the so-called changes in emphasis associated with IRs.

The subtle shifts in linking created by this choice are nicely illustrated in the attested (14), in which two IR examples are juxtaposed.

14. Context: discussion of the nature of structural codification.

[...] this fact of structure may indeed point out to a process of selectivity, by which only a few—often only two—functional "peaks" along a continuum become strongly coded, thus often producing the illusion that the semantic or pragmatic dimension itself is discrete and binary. In many areas of discourse pragmatics, however, the evidence strongly suggests that the underlying scale dimension is itself non-discrete, and even its associated code is n-ary rather than binary. [Givón, 1987: 177]

The referent of both the PNself and the PAUXself is the semantic or pragmatic dimension, and the alternative is the structural code. In both cases, the IR triggers the inclusive reading, highlighting the similarity between the referent and the alternative. The PNself indicates that the properties of binarity and discreteness should be attached to the referent marked as anchor (all this embedded under illusion). The following PAUXself signals that the current informational contribution is the connection created between the referent (the aforementioned dimension) and the predicate (the non-discrete continuum), both of which serve as anchors.

The cues of discourse linking and anchoring signalled by the IRs thus enable subtle shifts in highlighting of the referent and predicate.

## Summary:

- The (English) IR in all positions displays similar readings.
- Function - evocation of alternatives for comparison
- It is underdetermined as to the result of comparison.
- The specific contribution of the IR is conversationally implicated and highly context dependent.

- Set selection is affected by scope
- English IR takes scope over the element that immediately precedes it
- Scope differences signal differences in anchoring to prior context (information structure)

Table II: Summarising Properties of IRs

	PNself	VPself	PAUXself
Comparison	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scope	Antecedent	Predicate	Auxiliary
Set	Any relevant set	Predicate based	Aux. + Predicate based
Antecedent	Any NP	Subject	Subject
Activation	Not necessary	Not necessary	Referent + Predicate
Anchoring	Referent	Predicate	Referent + Predicate
Informational contribution	(properties of) Referent / Predicate	Referent	Link between Referent & Predicate

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